

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 EB-08
/062 W

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O 041255Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8805

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL QUEBEC IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL TORONTO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTREAL 551

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: LATEST QUEBEC POLL RESULTS ARE MIXED BLESSING FOR EACH SIDE

REF: A. 76 MONTREAL 1697, B. 76 MONTREAL 1783

1. SUMMARY: LATEST QUEBEC POLL SHOWS MODEST INCREASE IN SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE, LARGER INCREASE IN SUPPORT FOR PARTI QUEBECOIS (PQ), LIBERALS STILL MOST POPULAR FEDERAL PARTY IN QUEBEC, AND PERSONAL POPULARITY OF BOTH LEVESQUE AND TRUDEAU HIGH. ONE-THIRD OF THOSE PLLED WOULD FAVOR INDEPENDENCE IF COUPLED WITH ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH REST OF CANADA BUT ONLY SIXTEEN PERCENT FAVOR INDEPENDENCE OTHERWISE. END SUMMARY.

2. POLL, COMMISSIONED BY CBC RADIO PROGRAM AND BROADCAST SUNDAY APRIL 3, WAS CARRIED OUT BY MAURICE PINARD AND ASSOCIATES WHICH GENERALLY RELIABLE (SEE REFTELS). IT WAS CONDUCTED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 24 AND MARCH 2, I.E., JUST AFTER TRUDEAU TRIP TO WASHINGTON.

FOLLOWING ARE APPROXIMATE QUESTIONS (I.E., AS TAKEN FROM BROADCAST) AND RESPONSES, ALL OF WHICH ARE GIVEN IN PERCENT-
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TAGES.

A. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH CONDITIONS IN QUEBEC TODAY?
VERY WELL: 3.8; RATHER WELL: 38; NOT VERY WELL: 38.1 NOT AT ALL:
16.4.

B. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC? VERY: 11.5; RATHER: 37; NOT VERY: 19; NOT AT ALL: 15.

C. HOW MUCH CONFIDENCE DO YOU HAVE IN LEVESQUE AND TRUDEAU?

RE LEVESQUE, A LOT: 34; SOME: 27.5; LITTLE: 17.5; NONE: 15.
RE TRUDEAU, A LOT: 31; SOME: 36; LITTLE: 22; NONE: 8. "MOST"
(NOT SPECIFICALLY QUANTIFIED) SUPPORT FOR LEVESQUE CAME FROM
FRANCOPHONES, FOR TRUDEAU FROM ANGLOPHONES. AMONG AVOWED
INDEPENDENTISTS, LEVESQUE RATED 84 PERCENT UNDER "A LOT", TRUDEAU
15 PERCENT.

D. WOULD YOU VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCE OF QUEBEC WHICH WOULD BE
COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM REST OF CANADA? YES: 16.7; NO: 66.4;
DON'T KNOW OR WOULDN'T ANSWER: 15.4. (BRYCE MACKASEY POINTS OUT
THAT 16 PERCENT WAS SAME FIGURE REACHED IN FIRST POLL ON
SUBJECT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, WHICH HE DEEMS PROOF THAT NUMBER OF
HARD-CORE SEPARATISTS IS NOT INCREASING.)

E. WOULD YOU VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCE OF QUEBEC IF THERE WERE
AN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH THE REST OF CANADA? YES: 32.4;
NO: 52; DON'T KNOW OR WOULDN'T ANSWER: 15. BREAKDOWN SHOWED
FRENCH VOTED 38 PERCENT YES, 45 PERCENT NO, WHILE 82 PERCENT OF
ANGLOPHONES ANSWERED NO. THOSE WHO HAD RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY
WERE THEN ASKED "WOULD YOU VOTE THE SAME WAY IF THERE WERE NO
ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION?" RESPONSES WERE: YES, 36; NO, 47: NO
ANSWER, 17.

F. IF THERE WERE A GENERAL FEDERAL ELECTION TODAY, WHICH PARTY
WOULD YOU VOTE FOR OR LEAN TOWARD VOTING FOR? LIBERALS 36.6;
CONSERVATIVES: 12.1; NDP: 6; SOCIAL CREDIT: 5; WOULD NOT VOTE
OR WOULD SPOIL BALLOT (PRESUMABLY PQ): 7.7; NO ANSWER: 29.

G. IF THERE WERE A PROVINCIAL ELECTION TODAY, WHICH PARTY
WOULD YOU VOTE FOR OR LEAN TOWARD VOTING FOR? LIBERALS: 15;
UNION NATIONALE: 13; PQ: 39; NO ANSWER: 28. PINARD BELIEVES
"NO ANSWER" GROUP WOULD NOT DIVIDE PROPORTIONATELY IN ACTUAL VOTE
AND WOULD INCREASE PQ SHARE TO 57 PERCENT. THIS IS HIGHEST
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SUPPORT LEVEL FOR GOVERNMENT SINCE BOURASSA SWEEP IN OCTOBER 1973.
LIBERALS AND UN WOULD GO TO 21 AND 19 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY.

H. WITH REGARD TO A CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION, WOULD YOU FAVOR
GIVING MORE POWER TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (12.4), TO THE QUEBEC
GOVERNMENT (38.5), OR LEAVING THE PRESENT DIVISION OF POWERS AS
IT IS (35.6).

3. POLL RESULTS WERE RELEASED TO HEADS OF TWO GOVERNMENTS
SEVERAL DAYS AGO IN ORDER HAVE SPOKESMEN COMMENT DURING BORADCAST.
ANDRE OUELLET NAMED TO REPRESENT GOC; CLAUDE MORIN FOR GOQ.
MORIN "IMPRESSED AND ENCOURAGED" BY SOVEREIGNTY/ASSOCIATION VOTE
"SINCE THAT WHAT PQ HAS ALWAYS STOOD FOR." OUELLET BELIEVES
REST OF CANADA WILL SAY "NO" TO SUCH PROPOSITION AND THAT PQ
DOES NOT HAVE "MANDATE" SEEK SEPARATION OR ASSOCIATION UNTIL
AFTER REFERENDUM BUT STRESSED THAT GOC "FLEXIBLE" RE SPECIFIC
ISSUES.

4. FOLLOW-ON INTERVIEW WITH BUSINESSMAN NAMED WILLIAMS IN CALGARY,
SIMON REISMAN IN OTTAWA, PROF. COOK IN TORONTO, AND EDITOR

EVELYN DUMAS OF LE JOUR IN MONTREAL FOUND FIRST THREE ALL DOUBT ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION COULD BE ACHIEVED -- REISMAN SAID ACCOMMODATION MIGHT BE POSSIBLE "IN ONE OR TWO DECADES, AFTER THINGS COOL DOWN" -- WHILE DUMAS THINKS IT WILL COME ABOUT FAIRLY PROMPTLY BECAUSE IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST.

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5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH 16 PERCENT PRO-INDEPENDENCE FIGURE IS UP FROM ELEVEN PERCENT SHORTLY AFTER ELECTION, IT NOTEWORTHY THAT "NO ANSWER" HAS DROPPED FROM 25 TO 15 PERCENT AND ANTI-INDEPENDENCE FORCES GOT THEIR SHARE. CONTRASTING SUPPORT OF 33 PERCENT FOR INDEPENDENCE-IN-ECONOMIC-ASSOCIATION INTERPRETABLE AS REFLECTION LACK OF REAL ATTACHMENT TO CANADA BUT UNWILLINGNESS PAY PRICE OF SEPARATION. THIS RAISES QUESTION WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN REF-ERENDUM IF PROVINCE SUDDENLY FOUND GREAT LODGE OF IMPORTANT RESOURCE THAT WOULD MAKE INDEPENDENT ECONOMY MORE VIABLE.

6. PQ WILL DRAW COMFORT FROM GREATER SATISFACTION WITH GOQ THAN WITH GENERAL CONDITIONS, WHICH THEY INHERITED. ON OTHER HAND, CLOSENESS OF CONFIDENCE VOTE ON LEADERS, WITH EDGE TO TRUDEAU, AND SURPRISINGLY LARGE VOTE TO LEAVE DIVISION OF POWERS AS IS WILL HEARTEN LIBERALS ESPECIALLY BUT ALSO, TO SOME EXTENT, FEDERALISTS OF ALL STRIPES. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH QUESTION ON FEDERAL PARTIES WAS IN GENERAL ELECTION CONTEXT, LIBERALS BOUND TO BE ENCOURAGED RE PROSPECTS IN UPCOMING BYELECTIONS. (PINARD TELLS US THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE; HE CAN SEE NO WAY FOR THEM TO BE IN TROUBLE.)

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7. EXPECTABLY, EACH INTERVIEWEE READ INTO FIGURES WHAT HE/SHE WANTED TO FIND. MORIN WAS SOMEWHAT MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OUELLET AND REISMAN MORE THAN OTHERS ON HIS PANEL, DISCOUNTING POSSIBILITY OF ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION ON BASIS "QUEBEC ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 22 PERCENT OF CANADIAN ECONOMY AND SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THAT PROPORTION OF POPULATION, SO REST OF CANADA WOULD NOT AGREE TO EQUAL WEIGHT IN ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING WHEREAS QUEBEC COULD NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS WHILE CLAIMING TO BE 'INDEPENDENT'." HE ACCUSED MORIN, LEVESQUE AND PARIZEAU OF KNOWING THIS AND DELIBERATELY HOODWINKING THE PUBLIC ON THIS ISSUE.

8. FINALLY, POLL SHOWS MAJORITY OF QUEBECKERS WILLING GIVE BENEFIT OF DOUBT TO NEW GOQ, PRIOR OPENING OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DESPITE LACK OF CONCRETE PROGRESS AND MULTIPLICITY OF CONTRADICTIONS IN EARLY MONTHS OF ADMINISTRATION. WHETHER PERFORMANCE SINCE MARCH 8, AND ESPECIALLY SINCE INTRODUCING LANGUAGE POLICY WHITE PAPER, WOULD PROMPT SAME POLL RESULTS REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT SEEMS QUESTIONABLE TO US -- AT LEAST AS FAR AS MONTREALERS ARE CONCERNED. HOWEVER, PINARD TELLS US HE THINKS RESULTS WOULD BE SAME IF POLL TAKEN IN NEXT TWO TO THREE WEEKS, BEFORE NEW ATTITUDES HAVE TIME TO JELL.
HARPER

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